



News release

Climate change and the water resource

5 December 2005

In the run-up to a UN conference on climate change, water - one of world's most valuable resources - has been the focus for leading scientists at the [Met Office's Hadley Centre](#). Experts there have studied the Earth's water cycle and will present their findings at the 11th Conference of the Parties in Montreal this week.

In a new brochure published for the conference, researchers have analysed past changes in the Earth's water cycle and made predictions about how climate change will affect our rivers and rainfall.

It states that there is now stronger evidence that extremes of rainfall over land have changed over recent years and that human activity is changing river flows.

In Africa, severe drought has already been experienced. With predictions of less rainfall and increased temperatures across North Africa in the future, there is likely to be increased drought and large reductions in river flow.

Whilst predictions for temperature reveal an almost universal increase from current levels, changes in rainfall patterns and river flow are more variable, both geographically and between different climate models. As part of future research, the Hadley Centre will try to measure this uncertainty and reduce it.

Notes:

A report entitled [*Climate change, rivers and rainfall: recent research on climate change science from the Hadley Centre, December 2005*](#) (PDF, 1.7 Mb) describes the work in more detail.

The results will be discussed at a side event to the [CoP11 conferences](#) on 7 December at 19:30-21:00 in the Three Rivers venue in Montreal. Attendees of the CoP conference are invited to attend and discuss the results.

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